

FIREMAN'S GAZETTE

A Weekly Chronicle of the Fire Department, Military, Masonic, Yacht, Field Sports, Regattas, Angling, Theatrical, and General News of California.

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SAN FRANCISCO: SATURDAY MORNING, JANUARY 3, 1858.

WHOLE NO. 144.

CHARLES M. CHASE, Proprietor.

OUR TASK—TO ENLIGHTEN.

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(From the New York Leader.)

The Bummers' Whisper.

BY LEMON PEARL.

A supposition "prevails to a great extent in this community," that when any old traveler is caught sleeping in a hovel, he is certain to get ten dollars. (See *Angel's Whisper*.)

A bummers' whisper:
His partner was creeping
Inside of a hoghead these voracious had found;
And the rain it was falling
In torrents appalling.
As he whispered, "oh dimminy, don't he sleep sound?"

As he gently rolled over,
His comrade, not sober,
Woke up from his sleep and opened one eye;
Then grumbling profoundly,
And swearing quite roundly,
Expressed his belief, though it rained, he was dry.

At day light next morning,
The Policeman's warning
Aroused these two bummers and bid them pre-
pare
By a kind invitation,
To go to a station
Adapted for justice to live wherever.

Just Justice potential
Deemed it was essential
To give them good quarters, away from the dew,
Then giving each ten dollars,
With a lecture appended,
He said "that small hoghead would never hold two."

LOST.

The Story of Four Young Men.

IV.—THE MURDER AND SUICIDE.

(Continued.)

Ten years passed away. In my happy home, surrounded by my wife and children, I rarely gave a thought to the wild days of my youth, and was gradually settling myself down into a humdrum attorney at law. My profession enlisted all the intellectual energy which I possessed, and for recreation and happiness I did not desire to look beyond the affectionate home circle which met me each day with loving smiles and caresses. If in the midst of my toils, or my evening joys, the figures of Marquis Cotesbury and his companions ever rose before me—if the beautiful face of Caroline Francis my wife's former friend smiled in my memory—if, in a word, that old life came back, in a dream as it were, I did not long continue to dwell upon it. As we pass on in life things change in value for us—old ties become looser—we have a lingering kindness for old times, and old faces; but the wife at our side the children round our knees, soon rout all our dreams, and bring us back to the sweeter reality. To sum up every thing, Marquis Cotesbury and his companions had entirely disappeared from my horizon, when one morning a letter was laid on my table which recalled old times.

It was a request from Marquis that I would come to—at an early moment as I found convenient; he required my assistance in a matter of important business.

Our Superior Court had just adjourned, and the request, which at any other time I could not have responded to was perfectly feasible. On the very next morning therefore I took the stage coach, and set out for the city of—.

In those days travelling was a very tedious affair; and as I should be at least two days upon the road, I determined to arrange my time economically—a portion for conversation, another for thought, another for observation of the country.

In the prosecution of this plan I met with but one obstacle. This was the presence of two men upon the outside of the vehicle who were intoxicated, and continued throughout the day to utter the most disgusting oaths. When the coach stopped for the night these men had an altercation with driver, who declined attempting a very dangerous piece of road in the pitch darkness. He remained stubborn and immovable, and the quarrelsome passengers finally staggered off to the bar-room of the tavern where they called for whisky-punches, and applied themselves assiduously to the task of "making a night of it."

As they passed me I thought there was something familiar in the faces bloated and blotched by habits of confirmed intemperance, an idea occurred to me that I had defended one at least of them in a criminal trial some years before. I could not be certain of this, however, and dismissed the subject from my mind, selecting another apartment for my newspaper, and glad to get away from their drunken revelry. At ten o'clock, as I passed the bar-room, I saw the two men wrestling with each other, and uttering oaths

mingled with drunken laughter; and, not wishing to sadden myself longer with the spectacle I retired to sleep.

I had slept two or three hours, I suppose, when a sudden outcry, followed by the explosion of a pistol, suddenly awakened me. I hastily drew on my clothes and descended to the lower floor where a confused crowd of persons, and lights moving about, indicated some terrible source of excitement. I shall never forget the horrible spectacle which greeted my eyes as I entered the common room. At two paces from the door, one of the two men I had left drinking lay dead, with a terrible wound in his forehead, evidently produced by the ball of a pistol; at the other end of the apartment, his companion was pale as ashes. He was evidently dying, and indeed expired in a few minutes after my entrance. But before his eyes became glazed we exchanged a glance which made me draw back, faint and shuddering. I had recognized in that changed look of the dying, my friend of other days, Tom Francis. An examination of the other's face revealed also the fact that his companion was the kind of good fellow—the sunbeam of our old revels—poor Charley Ashton.

My horror and grief were too great for speech; but at last I inquired the particulars of the shocking event. The companions had continued to sit up and order fresh drink long after every one had retired, despite remonstrances of the landlord; and with each additional potation they grew more wild and ungovernable. Commencing a playful altercation, they had grappled in a laughing wrestle, but the rough play irritated them both. The landlord said that he first comprehended this dangerous change of feeling from their voices but, quickly as he hastened from his post behind the counter, he had been unable to part them. Drawing a knife from his bosom one of them had plunged it into the other's heart—and then, recoiling with wild horror at what he had done, had drawn a pistol, and placing it to his forehead, put an end to his own life.

I shall not attempt to convey an impression of my feelings at this terrible tragedy. The murder and suicide of two men who had been my close friends communicated to my nature a shock which I did not recover from for years. I pray that never while I live a similar spectacle may be presented to my eyes. The dead bodies were most solemnly removed, very few words were spoken, and on the next day, when we continued our journey, little was said of the occurrence. It was something too awful even for conversation.

I reached at—four in the evening, and at five had made my toilet, and presented myself at the door of Marquis Cotesbury's splendid mansion, once so familiar.

V.—MARQUIS COTESBURY AT THIRTY-SIX.

I had not been in the well-remembered receiving-room five minutes when Marquis entered. His appearance shocked me profoundly—all his bloom and beauty of countenance had disappeared, his cheeks were sunken and flushed his eyes bloodshot, and of a lack-lustre appearance, and as he came toward me I perceived that his gait was unsteady, and at one moment he was compelled to catch the corner of a marble table to keep himself from staggering.

"Why, how are you, my dear Will?" he said, shaking my hand warmly, and looking at me with his kind glance. "It's good for your eyes to see you, my boy, and you see my eyes are not far from that—rings round 'em, and sunken—drink, drink, I told you how it would be—ha! ha!—but you? You look as fresh as a May morning, my youngster!"

And Marquis gazed at me again with his kind, good eyes, until tears nearly rushed from my own.

"Oh, my dear Marquis! my dear friend," I could not help saying, "it pains me to the heart to see you looking so ill. Ten years have wasted you painfully—very painfully."

Marquis steadied himself by a chair and sat down, with a laugh.

"That's true, Will, my boy. Ten years of drink are enough to hurt any constitution, and mine was of iron. I am really astonished, sometimes, to think of how strong I must have been originally. I think I'll last five or ten years longer—the rest won't."

I was too much pained to reply.

"There was that fellow Thornburgh, who had the little affair with me, you remember, in the year—," continued Marquis, laughing, "drank himself within a foot of the grave, and then, as luck would have it, broke his neck by a fall from his horse, after dinner. He was a great rascal—he cheated me at cards, if I recall rightly—I remember something about it, but my memory grows sadly treacherous. Then there was Charley and Tom—poor Tom! They still keep it up. They are both long since ruined, and lead wandering lives. I've tried to reclaim Tom, and—this is a family secret—he gets pines from me; but the devil of drink's got him. It's only a question of sooner or later—poor Tom!—and I cry sometimes thinking of him, thinking to what he may come poor fellow! Tom's a good fellow!"

And for a moment Marquis looked profoundly sorrowful. I could not find it in my heart to tell him of the horrible tragedy I had witnessed and turned the conversation. I found that I could easily lead Marquis to any subject, and as the effect of the wine he had taken wore off I thought it as favorable an opportunity as I could obtain to talk upon business.

Marquis declared that the topic should not be introduced until I had been with him for a month but I vetoed this, and was soon put in possession of the points he desired my opinion upon. It is only necessary to say that these were questions of law, touching the doctrines of wills, and indeed it was to write his complicated will that Marquis sent for me. In spite of his enormous losses at cards, his property was still immense, and every day increased in value; and after a general conversation on the subject, dinner was announced.

As I entered the well-remembered apartment, where the great dark mahogany table was set forth, with its splendid service of plate, I almost started at the sight of Jugurtha standing waiter in hand, behind his master's chair. The sight of the servant's face brought a rush of memories, and when he bowed and respectfully smiled by way of greeting, was the same bow and smile with which he handed the pitcher of julep to us before we had risen, ten long years before.

Marquis apologized for "Mrs. Cotesbury's" non-appearance. She was a little unwell-to-day, and begged to be excused. So we dined in solitary state, surrounded by a dozen servants, silent, and moving noiselessly.

The dinner was superb, and my host did full justice to it. His constitution was indeed an iron one; the immense assaults he had made upon it seemed not to have impaired its capacities of enjoyment, and Marquis ate with the air of a trained epicure. I found by my plate a semi-circle of glasses, variously shaped and of different colors, for the numerous wines—Champagne, Madeira, cork, sherry, Val de Penas, Bordeaux, etc.; but to all Marquis's invitations I turned a deaf ear.

"I have drank nothing for ten years," I said, and you must excuse me.

"Nothing for ten years?" cried Marquis, filling my glass and his own with Champagne from a bottle which Jugurtha had just opened; "is such a thing possible in the nature of human things? The idea! Why what a dull life!—You've kept yourself from a thousand—yes, ten thousand glorious delights, Will!"

"Marquis, I said, looking him calmly in the face, 'I've kept myself from perdition; and if you don't initiate me, your own prophecy will come true.'

"What prophecy?" he said, sipping his Champagne with a good-natured smile.

The warning you read in Burton's Anatomy.

Why, certainly, I remember! cried Marquis, shaking with laughter; I think I came on the world—stop, what word was it? and with contracted brows he seemed trying to remember.

I will tell you, I said. The word was *Lost!*

So it was; but what are we 'fashioning our heads' with all this nonsense for? Let me give you a piece of this duck, and a glass of sherry. No? Well, my dear boy, you're a man of taste. I despise all these slops. Jugurtha, turning his head away these glasses, and bring me some whisky.

Jugurtha silently glided to the wine-closet and brought forth a common black bottle, which he presented to his master on a silver waiter.

After all, said Marquis, pouring out half a tumbler of the pale yellow liquid, which an attentive servant diluted with ice water, after all there's nothing like good old whisky. Your brandies nauticate me and burn me up, but this is the pure *aqua vite*—water of life. When I drink I am surrounded by all the heathen gods and goddesses—ha! ha!—especially the goddesses—for 'never alone come the immortals!'

A harsh cracked laugh accompanied the words and Marquis drained his whisky at a single draught.

When the dessert was removed from the table Marquis had emptied the whiskey bottle, and declared himself growing "companionable." I witnessed with astonishment the extraordinary amount he drank—for another capacious bottle of the heady liquor gradually disappeared before his determined attacks. To have remonstrated with him for this enormous excess would be purely gratuitous. It was plainly a fixed, daily habit and I could only sit silent and gaze at my companion, who refused to rise "till he had finished his allowance."

I was compelled to yield; and at that afternoon listened to talk such as, for wild and brilliant vigor penetrating criticism, and dazzling subtlety, I had never heard from mortal in this world, nor in hell. The liquids he had drunk seemed simply to warm his intellect to its normal state—to arouse the mental energy of this extraordinary man—and when some weird extravagance marred his vivid sentences, it was not caused by what he had drunken now, but the warping of the brain, resulting from habitual excess. I shall only add, in ending my sketch of a scene so painful to me though crammed with tragic interest, that I have never met with the human intellect which exhibited such splendid grace and strength; never heard the talker who poured out such grand ideas in such gorgeous and imperial profusion. I sometimes sit and wonder now if the Enemy of Souls was not personally present in what is his best emblem—the fiery liquid, and if he did not prompt the speaker in his flights of royal thought—giving aim logic, criticism, pathos, humor, satire, scoffing and sneers—and laughing from behind the bottle as he listened and wondering at the matchless intellect he had roused to this wild activity.

When we rose there was the same unsteady gait observable in Marquis and the slight hesita-

tion of speech I had noticed in the morning. Beyond this he exhibited none of the evidences of intoxication. I returned to my lodgings and on the next day, shutting myself up in my chamber accomplished the legal business my friend requested at my hands. It was Marquis's will, as I said, and Providence decreed, in its pleasure that many charitable public institutions should know and admire the discriminating benevolence of this singular man.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Fire Matters in Baltimore.

BALTIMORE, Nov. 25th, 1857.

The quiet aspect assumed by the fire department during the political excitement, has worn away, and they are now performing duty with the active spirit that always characterized their exertions. We have, however, noticed no increase in the number of companies who perform the midnight duty. The number of these midnight "whiffs" who are called out by the alarm, when this particular subject will come up before that august body—now chiefly composed of active firemen—doubtless to the great discomfiture of those companies who are late in the morning.

The subject of officers to serve the ensuing year, is now being discussed in the several companies. Our advice is, select none but active men to set an example the companies should follow.

The recent burning of the steamship Henry Beach, and a large warehouse on Baltimore street, together with several fires of smaller note, have afforded an opportunity for a display of the judgment and exertion of our department, which we are pleased to record, has been sustained by the harmonious unity of action evinced on every occasion. Such displays of good feeling among a band of men, ever ready to do good, and to help the needy, are not common in the world, and are never, it seems, at a loss for cause to condemn the firemen.

Speaking of "old folks" reminds us of the peculiarities of the Baltimore firemen. They bear against the barking system, which the spirit of activity has given birth to in the present "fast age," or since the days that fires were extinguished by hand buckets. They are generally fair and kind, and are not prone to quarrel with each other, and that such scenes are daily and nightly enacted therein. We will not attempt to convince them to the contrary by argument, but will offer stronger proofs by tendering the *note* of an invitation to spend a few nights in a bunk-room, which action we will leave to convince them that they are decidedly wrong, and to injustice to that portion of the firemen who, to serve the community, are daily and nightly enduring the hardships attending a winter campaign.

Morality exists to a great extent within a bunk-room, and perhaps in some of the dwellings that are in the city. It is a good thing to find in every block. And such is the case among all associations where the action of perhaps a few differ from the general. Still, all should not be classed in the list of the guilty where some may be innocent.

The committee on conference with the city fathers met last evening, and adjourned without coming to any definite conclusions. We advocate an entire reorganization. Its officers are numerous, and which openly state every active fireman in the city.

Yours, O. DICK.

FIRE.—The *Oregonian* of California of Dec. 27th, says: "About half-past twelve this morning, just as we were going to press, we were startled by the cry of fire. We rushed to our office window and saw a column of flame and smoke rising high above the surrounding buildings. The fire was in the old Union Restaurant, in the very heart of the most central and combustible block in town, was extinguished after a desperate struggle of ten or fifteen minutes. The building was a three-story structure, and the roof about half consumed. The fire got a better start than it could gain in trying a thousand times, and as it was fairly made to subside, we shall not hereafter be in the least alarmed by a fire in the city. The fire was caused by a gas stove, and the roof about half consumed. The fire got a better start than it could gain in trying a thousand times, and as it was fairly made to subside, we shall not hereafter be in the least alarmed by a fire in the city. 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